



Fall 2017

Director's Note

By Kevin Francis, MES Director



Over the years, I've enjoyed getting to know new students by co-teaching Conceptualizing Our Regional Environment, the first course of the core sequence. Our teaching team this year includes our newest MES faculty, Shawn Olson-Hazboun, an environmental sociologist whose research includes public attitudes on climate change. Our Fall 2017 cohort hit the ground running with a three-day field trip to the Olympic Peninsula (see evergreen.edu/mes/blog).

Our Fall newsletter highlights two of the many electives offered by adjunct faculty. Our adjunct faculty members have impressive careers outside academics and provide a vital link to careers in state and federal agencies, NGOs, and environmental consulting. We're sharing excerpts from student self-evaluations that illustrate the value of these courses for their professional development.

Reflections on Environmental Leadership

This summer Former Commissioner of Public Lands, **Peter Goldmark**, taught Environmental Leadership, an elective with emphasis in environmental policy and collaborative decision making. Student **Malena Boome** found the class to be helpful as she decides a career trajectory: "I was not expecting such a wide array of inspiring guests every week and did not realize when signing up for the course what an impact this class would have on me...I am deciding what life I want to lead in the future. I want to take a role in environmental leadership and it took a lot of soul searching and recognition of my duties as a human being to realize that...***I learned so much in this class that I plan to take with me as a change agent in the future.***"

Michelle Horkings-Brigham was most impressed by the multiple guest speakers and the demonstrated thoughtful decision making on behalf of the environment: "I felt privileged to be attending a course that addressed, in such dynamic fashion, concepts of environmental leadership achieved on the local level that had global implications...The selection of speakers throughout the course provided outstanding and varied examples of what it means to lead a worthy cause. Every presenter revealed unique, yet often similar, approaches to solving environmental problems. Not only would we study issues surrounding the protection of a marine or mountain environment, but we actually met and had the opportunity to query those directly involved in years of effort to protect these vital habitats."



Students in Environmental Leadership on a field trip to Dabob Bay, in Hood Canal: home to shellfish farming, the US Navy, and a thriving aquatic ecosystem. Photo by Peter Bahls.



Unexpected Challenges and Rewards in Tropical Ecology

In May 2018, 15 MES Students will join faculty members Richard Bigley and Marc Hayes on a two week international elective to Costa Rica to study Tropical Ecology. Bigley is a forest ecologist for Washington's Department of Natural Resources and Hayes is a herpetologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; both have spent substantial time researching tropical ecosystems.

As part of the course students will develop and complete an independent research project. This will be the second time this course has been offered.

For recent graduate Scott Dubble, Tropical Ecology was a formative experience. His research project involved a variety of soil, water and air sampling with simple, easily attainable tools. While his research provided opportunities for collaboration and challenge, the highlight of this trip for him was actually a walk on the beach:

"After a day of exploring the amazing diversity in this lowland tropical rainforest, I participated in an intense hike on the beach at night to observe sea turtle nesting. At several points I thought I could not keep up the pace and would have to give up and wait for the others to return and recover my remains on their return trip, but somehow, I managed to keep up. When we reached the end of the hike to rest and to give the giant creatures a chance to find their



The 2016 MES tropical Ecology class and support crew from the Organization for Tropical Studies on the porch of the OTS out station on the edge of The La Amistad International Park in Costa Rica. The reserve boasts 600 species of birds, 380 reptiles or amphibians, and 5 big cats. Photo courtesy of Richard Bigley.

... nests behind us, **I experienced one of the most amazing nights of my life.** The roar of the crashing waves and the injunction to remain quiet to not disturb the wildlife, the setting crescent moon and intensely bright Milky Way lighting the beach and silhouetting the jungle, and the scents on the ocean breeze created a unique and thrilling visual soundscape.

"Then we encountered the beautiful turtles and their enormous task up close. Had I known how physically challenging this hike would be, I might not have volunteered, but was glad I did. This set the tone for many experiences to come." Scott concludes, "I enjoyed working with all of my peers and [learning from] their presentations... and feel very fortunate to have had this incredible learning experience"

MES Applications are open!

Are you interested in developing your environmental leadership skills, or studying ecology in Costa Rica? Apply to join the MES Program in 2018!

Applications are open now. Our priority deadline is Monday, January 15.

See admissions criteria at evergreen.edu/mes/apply



**the evergreen
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